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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s (continued) (A/48/333)

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AGENDA ITEM 104: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/309, A/48/364)

1. Mr. LEE (Republic of Korea) said that his country, which had achieved remarkable economic growth thanks to its well-educated human resources, was keenly aware of the importance of human resources development in the development process. An integrated approach should be a key feature of any strategy in that field.

2. His Government encouraged industries and academia to collaborate in providing education and training, and had helped to forge links between educational institutions and local industries and other users of technology in both the public and the private sectors. Two new educational programmes combined on-the-job apprenticeship training with formal study. The Government encouraged such programmes by providing tax incentives to participating companies.

3. At the international level, cooperation between donor countries, recipient countries and countries providing training opportunities offered an effective strategy to meet the challenges of human resources development. Donor countries would be more forthcoming with financial resources knowing that their funds would be efficiently spent. Recipient countries would be less reluctant to receive outside assistance when the provider of education and training was in a third country, thus guaranteeing more neutrality in the relationship between recipients and donors.

4. With a view to meeting the human resources development needs of the developing countries more effectively, cooperation between them and the developed countries should be strengthened. The Korea International Cooperation Agency, which had been established in 1991, invited trainees and dispatched experts in support of human resources development. It also sent volunteers to local communities in a number of Asian countries to help residents improve their living conditions and, in some cases, to assist with the transfer of technology.

5. Mr. AROSEMENA (Panama), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and his own country, welcomed the reaffirmation at the eighth meeting on Economic Cooperation and Coordination among the Developing Countries held in Panama in September, of the importance of the Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries. The countries of Central America had moved beyond mere economic

(Mr. Arosemena, Panama)

cooperation towards greater integration and were continuing their efforts to reactivate the Central American Common Market. They welcomed the progress made in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

6. The end of the conflict between East and West should provide an opportunity for a new vision of North-South relations and for serious consideration of all aspects of development, particularly economic and technological development. Efforts to achieve the goal of sustainable development were being stymied by measures imposed by financial institutions and by the latter's insistence that the developing countries open up their markets. The result was hunger, unemployment and insecurity for their populations.

7. Cooperation among the developing countries must not be used as an excuse to reduce North-South cooperation. Notwithstanding the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 45/199, on the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, and 45/234, on the implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, the situation in many developing countries, had substantially deteriorated. The delegations on whose behalf he was speaking called on the international community, in particular, the industrialized countries, to honour their commitment to promote substantive change in the world economy, in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The developed countries should abandon their resistance to the transfer of technologies needed for development and should open their markets to commodities from the developing countries. A successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would avert a resurgence of protectionist measures and the resulting slowing down of cooperation between developing and developed countries as well as among developing countries.

8. Mr. AYUBI (Afghanistan) recalled General Assembly resolutions 46/156 and 47/173 and said that the least developed countries had been striving to reorient their macroeconomic and sectoral policies in order to create a favourable environment for sustained growth and development. However, the reduced flow of development resources, the serious external indebtedness of the least developed countries, the decline in their already marginal share of world trade, the limited role of the generalized system of preferences in determining world market access, together with the continuing decline in commodity prices severely threatened the sustainability of their domestic reforms. Although his delegation understood the current economic difficulties of donor countries, the global recession had substantially compounded the economic problems of the least developed countries and had sharply increased their need for external support. Foreign assistance should be increased in real terms and attention should be paid to the principles governing such allocations. Particular attention should be given to alleviating the plight of least developed countries which were also land-locked or the victims of natural disasters or of war. His own country was both land-locked and had been suffering from the destructive effects of war for over a decade.

9. He urged the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/156, which called for the establishment of focal points for least developed countries and the strengthening of existing ones in order to involve them actively in the

(Mr. Ayubi, Afghanistan)

implementation of the Programme of Action throughout the 1990s. Further delay in translating intentions into action would only widen the gap between the least developed countries and other nations.

10. Mrs. SEALY MONTEITH (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that given their limited natural and financial resources, the CARICOM countries had by and large identified their peoples as their main resource. Their national strategies had focused on raising the quality of life of their populations and encouraging them to take part in that process. One of the strategies the CARICOM countries had pursued for the development of their human resources was to pool their resources in order to maximize their capabilities. Within the Caribbean, their tertiary educational institutions, such as the University of the West Indies, had made a major contribution to the region's pool of trained personnel for the public and private sector. The College of Arts, Science and Technology, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute and the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute also played a major role in skills training and research and development.

11. One of the most fundamental ways of developing human potential was through education and training. Many developing countries were placing increasing emphasis on primary education and vocational training. Some attention had also been paid to upgrading higher education systems. To be meaningful, the content and nature of the educational and training processes must prepare those who passed through them to become part of a skilled and motivated workforce.

12. Capacity-building in science and technology was a crucial element in the process of development and its focus should be that of institution-building and the development of human resources to meet the needs of a changing technologically driven environment. The process of building the scientific and technological base of the economies of developing countries should be accelerated and deepened. To that end, it was important to harness indigenous and endogenous technologies for their development needs and to establish the link between science and technology and sustainable development.

13. Access to basic health care was a human right. In spite of the remarkable improvements over the years, enormous health problems still remained. In addition, the world was now facing serious new health challenges, as in the case of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). The Caribbean Community hoped that the necessary action would be taken to respect the right to health care. Similarly, attention should be paid to the special needs of the most vulnerable groups, including children, women and the elderly. Countries should adopt policies and programmes relating to women's employment, health, education and participation in decision-making.

14. Efforts to promote human development should be guided by the principle of democratization and international institutions responsible for the human component of development strategies should reflect that principle. Social and human concerns were important to the CARICOM member States, which wished to be assured adequate representation in those decision-making bodies.

15. Mr. ASHOR (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the critical economic and social situation of the developing countries was compounded by onerous structural adjustment programmes which were severely affecting the weaker and more marginal groups. International support must be mobilized to help the least developed countries break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and backwardness, and he called for full implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and urged donor countries to meet their revised official development assistance (ODA) targets.

16. The United Nations had helped to boost awareness of the vital role of women in social and economic development and of the link between the role of women and natural resources and the environment. The forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women would provide an opportunity to strengthen international commitment to the advancement of women under a broader conception of the nature and dimensions of development and the role of women therein. He hoped that the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development would soon be completed and would constitute an important input to the preparations for the Conference.

17. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had taken steps to promote the effective involvement of women in decision-making. Legislation had been adopted conferring full rights on Libyan women, eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and ensuring that they were not excluded from any field of professional life. Women were involved in political, social and economic activities at all levels.

18. Economic and technical cooperation between developing countries (ECDC and TCDC) would help to instil a spirit of collective self-reliance and would also help revitalize the North-South dialogue. One of the best ways of promoting such cooperation was by establishing regional and subregional economic associations among developing countries. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was already engaged in a form of such cooperation through the Arab Maghreb Union, which strove for dialogue and economic cooperation with other economic groupings. It had also established close economic and technical ties with developing countries through the creation of over 100 joint ventures in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as through its participation in a host of development projects. He stressed the need for the advanced countries and the United Nations to provide the necessary support and assistance for TCDC.

19. Mr. SOEGARDA (Indonesia) said that, while each Government must choose its own path to human resources development in accordance with its own national priorities, value systems, traditions and culture, there was a strong tendency to give special attention to such aspects of human resources development as education, health and employment. There was also a new emphasis on the role of science and technology as decisive components for the success of development. In that regard, there was a clear need for technological transformation and endogenous capacity-building.

20. While development was likely to increase such aggregate indicators as gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP), it had not succeeded in eradicating poverty or extending the benefits of development to the entire population. For that reason alone human resources development was imperative. Any improvement in the quality of human resources should reflect the growing requirements for skills, expertise and professional needs across the broad spectrum of development activities.

(Mr. Soegarda, Indoensia)

21. Women were particularly vulnerable to the shortcomings of the more traditional approach to development. Greater emphasis on the human resources approach would give women a greater role in the eradication of poverty, population planning and economic activities that would give them a more equitable share in the benefits of development. Moreover, given the unique role of women within the family, their positive impact would be much enhanced through greater access to education, especially at higher levels.

22. Over the past 25 years, Indonesia's five-year national development plans had been based on growth, stability and equity. Those three fundamental pillars of Indonesia's development were mutually reinforcing. Moreover, with rapid economic growth and development, equity could be promoted, poverty alleviated and peace and stability ensured.

23. The sharp decrease in the funding of operational activities of the United Nations system was having a negative impact on the system's ability to disburse concessional resource flows needed to assist developing countries in the development of their human resources. That trend should be reversed in order to enable developing countries to undertake structural adjustment with a view to creating a sound basis for development and improving the human condition. Effective international cooperation should be mobilized through the transfer of resources, experience and know-how in order to tap the vast potential of human resources in the developing countries.

24. Mr. SY (Organization of African Unity) said that the recent report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries had been very useful in providing an understanding and assessment of TCDC. That Committee's general conclusion was that the full potential of TCDC had not been utilized and that the related impediments to TCDC should be removed in order to ensure its contribution to the sustainable economic development of the developing countries. While the Organization of African Unity (OAU) agreed with most of the High-level Committee's recommendations regarding the application of TCDC in the 1990s, it considered that, certain vital factors must be accorded high priority if TCDC was to have more meaning in Africa during the current decade.

25. The apparently modest activities in the area of TCDC stemmed not from inadequate actions at the national level, where several focal points had been established and genuine efforts had been made to secure the cooperation of other developing countries. They were due rather to the insufficiency of financial support for TCDC both internally and externally. Many African countries had been constrained in the execution of TCDC programmes during the past decade because of the decline in foreign exchange earnings. Moreover, African countries carrying out structural adjustment programmes and debtor African countries as a whole had faced reduced flows of external financial assistance because of doubts about their creditworthiness. Adequate financial support was essential if TCDC was to be effective in promoting economic development in Africa in the 1990s.

26. The role of the regional economic groupings in Africa was very important for TCDC. Since the early 1970s, Africa had established a number of such groupings in all its regions, the most prominent being the Economic Community of

(Mr. Sy, OAU)

West African States, the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, and the Southern Africa Development Community. The African Economic Community, a continental integration arrangement, had been established in June 1991. Most of those groupings had provisions for technical cooperation among their member States, and their institutional framework should be used for TCDC activities to ensure more meaningful economic development in Africa in the 1990s.

27. The UNDP Special Unit for TCDC had played a major role in the achievements of TCDC so far, and OAU urged the United Nations to consolidate the capacity of the Special Unit for greater effectiveness in Africa in the years ahead.

28. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana) said that although more than a decade had elapsed since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries many developing countries still faced daunting economic challenges and the outlook for the future was not promising. Experience had shown that TCDC played an important role in enhancing the individual and collective self-reliance of developing countries. To achieve the fullest benefit, however, TCDC required joint efforts by all parties, especially those within the United Nations institutional framework. Moreover, the international financial institutions should be encouraged to make financial resources available as a catalyst for economic development programmes.

29. Cooperation among developing countries should become an increasingly decisive factor in international relations. Thus, his delegation endorsed the strategy adopted at the eighth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. That strategy had identified specific elements to be taken into consideration in national plans to accelerate TCDC and to make it central in the implementation of development activities. Its success would depend in large measure on the provision of necessary financial resources.

30. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his Government regarded human resources development as critical to improving the quality of life for people around the globe. In every region, individuals were striving to implement democratic and nation-building reforms. His Government hoped to help make those aspirations a reality through human resources development. The strategy of promoting national programmes would have a longer-lasting effect, and therefore, a greater impact, which would promote sustainable development by integrating related environmental, economic and social issues. The impact of structural change remained long after aid and technical assistance programmes had been completed.

31. His delegation was grateful for the insight provided in the report of the Secretary-General on developing human resources for development (A/48/364) into the cost-effectiveness and long-term human impact of primary education and primary health care on areas as diverse as market liberalization, political stabilization and social development; the issue must be studied in an integrated

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

manner. That could best be achieved by enhancing inter-agency coordination. It should be clearly understood that economic reform was basic to human development. Stable, free market democracies enhanced the contribution of each individual to development, and in so doing, bettered the human condition.

32. Mr. ALHABIB (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the human resources of each country constituted a potential key factor for development. Despite recent progress in that field, many problems remained: more than one billion people lived in absolute poverty, and rural groups in developing countries continued to receive less in terms of income opportunities and social services than their urban counterparts. No one would deny that primary responsibility for human resources development fell to each nation itself, but the negative impact of international economic problems on the ability of Governments to implement national plans could not be denied. As the Secretary-General stated in paragraph 118 of his report (A/48/364), the United Nations system, together with the developing and donor countries, must set a clear course based on a strategic vision of development into the next century that should emphasize betterment of the human condition, including participation of all groups and countries in the process and in the fruits of development.

33. Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries had great potential to promote the economic growth of these countries, and a significant increase in TCDC activities had occurred. Unfortunately, while TCDC deserved high priority, the funds allocated to such activities had decreased. It must be emphasized also that South-South cooperation should not be viewed as a replacement for North-South cooperation, but as a complement to it.

34. The effective role of women in the social and economic fields was a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. The related provisions of Agenda 21 should be utilized and implemented at all levels. The active role of rural women in the social and economic construction of a country could not be ignored. In many countries, rural women were an important factor in agricultural production. The forthcoming World Survey on the Role of Women in Development and the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women deserved close attention. Iran had undertaken measures to ensure the effective participation of women in social and economic fields in order to facilitate their active and full participation in all aspects of development.

35. Mr. ZAPATA (Philippines) said that economic growth and the improvement of basic social services were meaningless unless oriented towards the individual person. Human development encompassed all efforts to enhance man's faculties and enlarge his choices. Human resources development, while related to the larger concept of human development, referred specifically to the human component in all economic activity and could be viewed as an economic tool. While science and technology continued to develop and improve the non-human instruments in the economic process, they should also be employed to develop and improve its human component. Human resources development underscored the centrality of people in all development activity.

36. National capacity-building was vital; therefore the Philippines had intensified national efforts in human resources development and had made the best use of its scarce resources by emphasizing basic education and technical

(Mr. Zapata, Philippines)

training, which were linked to economic growth and sustained development. Human resources development had been integrated into the plan for the next decade entitled "Philippines 2000", which included comprehensive strategies for human development including supportive measures in areas such as population, employment, nutrition, housing, sanitation and communications. Empowerment of the people would lead to international competitiveness which would raise self-respect and confidence and would enhance the ability to cooperate with other peoples.

37. Developing countries like the Philippines were striving to refine and integrate human resources development policies and programmes into their national development strategies. His delegation invited industrialized countries to continue supporting such efforts. It commended the "Capacity 21" initiative launched by UNDP as well as the efforts of the United Nations Secretariat to integrate human resources development components in all its programmes.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.